This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A method, ~~as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:~~ for providing a virtual exit port for a robotic data storage library comprising:

    providing a robotic data storage library comprising:

        a plurality of storage locations, each capable of holding at least one data storage element,

        a data transfer interface for receiving said data storage element and establishing a communication path with said data storage element so that data can be transferred between the data storage element and a host computer,

        an actual exit port for transferring said data storage element out of said library, and

        a transport unit for moving said data storage element between one of said locations within said library and said actual exit port;

        defining at least one of said plurality of storage locations as a virtual exit port prior to receiving a command to export said data storage element from said library;

        and moving ~~a~~ said data storage element from one of said plurality of storage locations to said virtual exit port.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein said virtual exit port comprises at least one of said storage locations in a preferred location.

6. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim 5, wherein said preferred location

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~~comprises at least one storage location~~ is located in a magazine.

7. (Original) A method, as claimed in claim 5, wherein said preferred location comprises a plurality of contiguous storage locations.

8. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim 5, wherein said preferred location ~~comprises a storage location~~ is located nearer to said actual exit port than at least one other of said storage location~~s~~.

9. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim 8, wherein said preferred location ~~comprises a storage location located~~ is substantially adjacent to said actual exit port.

10. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein said step of defining is performed via a control panel.

11. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein said step of defining is performed via ~~a~~ said host computer.

12. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein said step of defining is performed via a controller of said library.

13. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein said step of defining comprises defining at least one default storage location as said virtual exit port.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a virtual exit port for a robotic data storage library comprising: providing a robotic data storage library comprising: a plurality of storage locations, each capable of holding at least one data storage element, a data transfer interface for receiving ~~a~~ said data storage element and establishing a communication path with ~~a~~ said data storage element so that data can be transferred between the data storage element and a host computer, an actual exit port for transferring ~~a~~ said data storage element out of said

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library, and a transport unit for moving a said data storage element between a one of said storage locations within said library and said actual exit port; defining at least one of said plurality of storage locations as a said virtual exit port prior to receiving a command to export a said data storage element from said library; first moving a said data storage element from one of said plurality of storage locations to said virtual exit port; and second moving a said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual exit port.

19. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim 18, further comprising: mapping said virtual exit port as an actual exit port to a said host computer such that the host computer perceives said virtual exit port as an said actual exit port of said library.

20. (Original) A method, as claimed in claim 19, wherein said mapping step precedes said first moving step.

21, 22 (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said providing step follows said step of moving a said data storage element directly.

24. (Currently Amended) A method, as claimed in claim 18, further comprising: providing an updated inventory to a said host computer.

25. (Original) A method, as claimed in claim 24, wherein said providing step follows said second moving step.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim 26, robotic data storage library comprising: a plurality of storage locations, each capable of holding at least one data storage element; a data transfer interface for receiving one of said data storage elements and

establishing a communication path with said data storage element so that data can be transferred between said data storage element and a host computer; an actual exit port for transferring said data storage element out of said library; a transport unit for moving said data storage element between one of said locations and said actual exit port; and a controller for receiving a command to export said data storage element from said library and for causing at least one of said storage locations to be defined as a virtual exit port prior to receiving said command to export said data storage element from said library wherein said controller is further adapted to direct said transport unit to move said data storage element from one of said plurality of storage locations to said virtual exit port.

28. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 27, wherein said controller is further adapted to direct said transport unit to move ~~a~~ said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual exit port.

29. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 27, wherein said controller further comprises a user interface for receiving a command to move ~~a~~ said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual exit port.

30. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 27, wherein said controller is further adapted to direct said transport unit to move ~~a~~ said data storage element directly from one of said plurality of storage locations to said actual exit port.

31. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 27, wherein said controller further comprises a user interface for receiving a command to move ~~a~~ said data storage element directly from one of said plurality of storage locations to said actual exit port.

32. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 27, wherein said virtual exit port comprises at least one storage location located in a preferred location.

33. (Original) A library, as claimed in claim 32, wherein said preferred location comprises at

least one storage location in a magazine.

34. (Original) A library, as claimed in claim 32, wherein said preferred location comprises a plurality of contiguous storage locations.

35. (Original) A library, as claimed in claim 32, wherein said preferred location comprises at least one storage location located substantially adjacent to said actual exit port.

38. (Currently Amended) A library, as claimed in claim 26 27, wherein said controller is further adapted to map said virtual exit port to a said host computer such that said host computer perceives said virtual exit port as an actual exit port.

39-42 (Cancelled)

43. (New) A robotic data storage library comprising:

a plurality of storage locations substantially comprised within said library wherein each of said storage locations is capable of holding at least one data storage element;

at least one of said storage locations designated as a virtual exit port;

a data transfer interface adapted to receive said data storage element and establish a data transfer path between said host computer and said data storage element;

an actual port capable of transferring said data storage element out of said library;

a transport unit adapted to move said data storage element between said storage locations and between said storage locations and said actual port;

a controller adapted to direct said transport unit to move said data storage element to said virtual exit port from one of said storage locations in response to at least one command from said host to export said data storage element from said library.

44. (New) The robotic data storage library of claim 43 wherein said actual port is both an actual entry port and actual exit port.

45. (New) The robotic data storage library of claim 43 wherein said transport unit is adapted to move said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual port in response to a later export command.

46. (New) The robotic data storage library of claim 43 wherein said transport unit is adapted to move said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual port upon an action to physically remove said data storage element from said library.

47. (New) A method for exporting a data storage element from a robotic data storage library comprising:

designating at least one storage location as a virtual exit port wherein said at least one storage location is substantially comprised within said library;

receiving a first storage element export command from a host computer to transport said data storage element from said storage location to an exit port;

moving said data storage element from said storage location to said virtual exit port in response to said first storage element export command;

responding to said host that said data storage element has been moved to said exit port;

receiving a second storage element export command to transport said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual exit port;

moving said data storage element from said virtual exit port to said actual exit port in response to said second storage element export command; and

exporting said storage element out of said library.

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